

FACT SHEET THIRTY TWO

DRUG CATEGORISATION AND CLASSIFICATION

What Category?

Drugs are separated into four general categories according to their effects:

Hallucinogens – Drugs that alter perception

Stimulants – Drugs that excite the Central Nervous System

Depressants – Drugs that suppress the Central Nervous System

Anaesthetics – Drugs that cause the inability to feel pain

However drugs can often have more than one effect and these effects can depend on **1) The drug** – in terms of amount, how it is used and what it is “cut” or taken with and **2) The person** - in terms of biology, tolerance and state of mind.

The Misuse of Drugs Act

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971* separates drugs into three classes that are based on their risk of harm. Each class has guidelines detailing the penalties received for being in illegal possession of the drug, as well as the penalty you may incur from supplying that drug to others, including your friends.

Maximum Penalties

Class A

Possession – 7 years prison and / or a fine

Possession with intent to supply – Life imprisonment and / or a fine

Class B

Possession – 5 years prison and / or a fine

Possession with intent to supply – 14 years prison and / or a fine

Class C

Possession – 2 years prison and / or a fine

Possession with intent to supply – 14 years prison and / or a fine

It is also an offence to produce a controlled substance or be involved in any part of the substance supply chain.

* Updated in 2004 with the reclassification of cannabis